

The Ruthven Zipcode



Ruthven, Iowa 51358 010-670

Volume XLVII No. 51

Wednesday, December 23, 2020

Impressed with Ruthven – Veterans Return Annually for Pheasant Hunt

by Jay Schoning

For years, service members and Veterans have held reunions of various types and sizes, getting together to reconnect and share stories and memories and to enjoy new ventures and memories. For one group of Veterans, all of whom are life-long friends, they found an annual pheasant hunting trip to be a relaxing way to get out and enjoy the great outdoors. It all started 25 years ago.

Chris Olson of the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and several of his friends who are all Veterans began going to South Dakota 25 years ago to hunt together. But, as the years went on, weather patterns desiccated the hunting in South Dakota and they were looking for someplace else to begin a new chapter in their annual hunt.

One of the members of the group of friends was Rick Langer who works for Quetica, a Service-Disabled, Veteran-Owned engineering and consulting firm. That's where Ruthven, Iowa comes in. Craig Markley, who lives on Lost Island Lake with his wife Lisa, works for the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Craig said "in the course of my work at the Iowa DOT, I hired Rick Langer and others within his company, Quetica, to help us with our freight and propane movement analysis. On occasion we would talk about Lisa and I spending a lot of time at our home on the south side of Lost Island Lake in Ruthven, Iowa. At the end of a meeting a few years ago, Rick was talking about how he organized an annual pheasant hunt

for some of his Veteran friends."

After the bird hunting in South Dakota became less and less productive, the Veterans and their sons began hunting in the Okoboji Iowa area in Dickinson County. Craig said that Rick would comment that "nobody in his group was very familiar with northwest Iowa" so they weren't having the best of luck. He then asked if Craig knew of any good public or private ground they could hunt around Ruthven as well as if there were any local hunters that could guide them."

Craig says "I immediately thought of Carl Jensen who was extremely excited about the opportunity to guide a group of Veterans and show-off the great pheasant hunting areas that we enjoy so much in this area. Carl and his friend Shea Hemmingsen, who was enlisted to help guide them, had told Lisa and I about this great group of guys so last year we hosted a lunch for sixteen of them." Carl and Shea are both life-long Ruthven residents.

Chris says his hunting buddies come from Idaho, Wisconsin, and all over Minnesota – "but most of us live in the Minneapolis/St. Paul suburbs. He says "it's been a great experience for the last four years coming to Ruthven and we look forward to returning every fall. Iowa people are awesome – friendly people, and very welcoming and we've had four seasons that have been great!"

Craig said they immediately knew this lunch hosting the group would become an annual event. So he said they "began planning for this year – even though the COVID-19 situation reduced the number of hunters to nine; we expanded our meal time



Each year this group of hunters who are Veterans and life-long friends look forward to pheasant hunting in the Ruthven area. And Carl Jensen and Shea Hemmingsen look forward to taking them out – while Craig and Lisa Markley look forward to hosting the weekend dinners.

with them to both Saturday and Sunday last weekend. And it sounds like they will be coming to the Ruthven area for many more years to come based on the great job Carl and Shea do in providing them lots of great pheasant hunting action."

Chris said their group got just shy of their limit with 45 birds in three days; six of them joined with Carl and Shea and six good dogs, pointers, in their hunting party. Chris says

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Ruthven Meat Locker Wins IGL Small Business of the Year Award

The Iowa Great Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce has announced the winners of this year's Large and Small Business awards. Board member Kris Walker announced on Thursday that the small business award winner is Ruthven Meat Locker of Ruthven and Spirit Lake.

"They have hosted 'Business After 5' events and are always willing to give back to the community

six days a week, open daily until 4:30 and 8:00 to 11:00 on Saturdays. The Ruthven Locker located in downtown Spirit Lake at 1608 Hill Avenue has winter hours of 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday – with extended hours in the summer.

Walker announced that Arnolds Park Amusement Park is the winner in the large business category. "With this year being very hard for every

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"it's just been a great experience in Ruthven and Spencer, where we stay in a motel, getting to know people and visiting the bars and restaurants. The pheasant hunting has been a great experience and I can't thank Carl and Shea more for all they do for us – and for the hospitality of the Markely's and everyone else in the area – northwest Iowa people are so welcoming and treat us so nice."

We thank the group, for serving

our country – and we are so glad they can gather once a year for some great outdoor adventure hunting Iowa pheasant. Carl and Shea look forward to taking them out – Craig and Lisa look forward to hosting the weekend dinners. And Chris says the group "thanks you Iowa, we all appreciate your hospitality and everyone has treated us nothing but well since we have been hunting there and were looking forward to spending more time down in Ruthven Iowa in the foreseeable future for sure."